TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION OF MAINE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CONNECTME AUTHORITY RULE

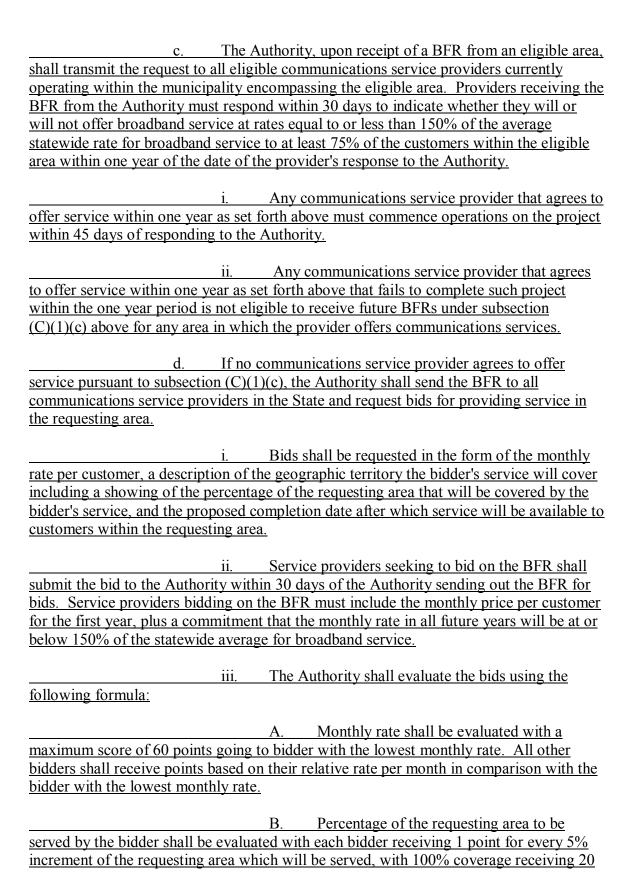
Section 1. Strike Section 6 in its entirety and replace with the following text:

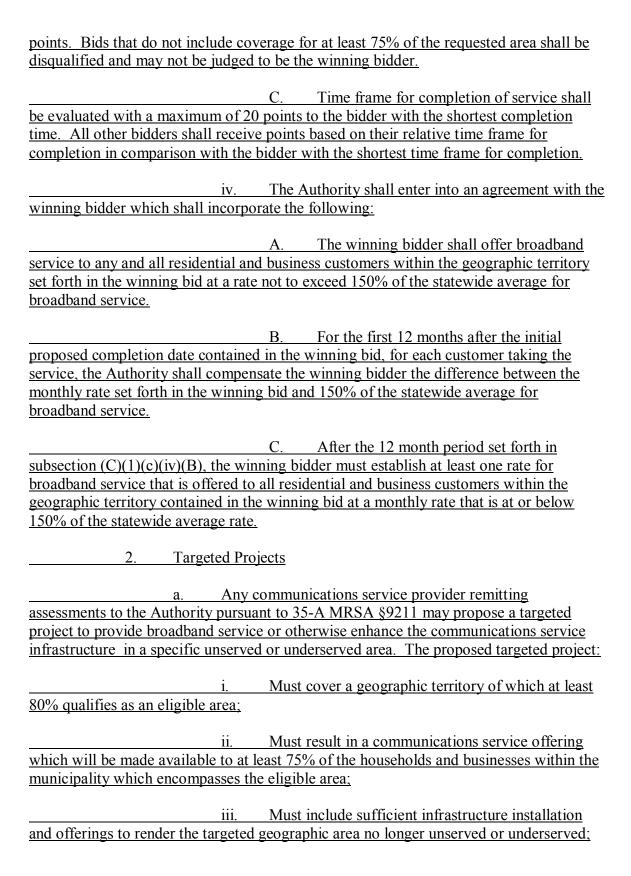
§ 6 ConnectME Authority Support
A. Eligible Areas. The Authority will only fund projects which are located
within an unserved or underserved area as defined in Section 5 of this Rule. For projects
which cover both served areas and areas which are either unserved or underserved, as
defined by the Authority, a minimum of 80% of the total geographic coverage the project
must be within unserved or underserved areas.
B. Eligible Projects.
1. Projects which may be funded by the Authority must be
undertaken on behalf of, in partnership with, or in support of one or more communication
service providers that are remitting assessments to the Authority under 35-A MRSA
§9211 <u>.</u>
2. The Authority may only fund projects that:
a. Expand the availability of broadband to residential and
small business customers in unserved or underserved areas;
b. Expand the availability of broadband with bandwidth.
synchronicity, reliability and security adequate to serve business, education and
enterprise consumers in unserved and underserved areas; or
c. Otherwise enhance the State's communications technology
infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas.
minastructure in unserved and underserved areas.
C. Process for Obtaining Authority Support
1. Bona Fide Request Process. The Bona Fide Request (BFR)
process is designed to allow communities in eligible areas to petition for broadband
service using the following process:
a. 50 customers residing in an eligible area, or 20% of the
total number of customers in the municipality which encompasses the eligible area,
whichever is less, may submit to the Authority a BFR for broadband service within their
area.

minimum of 1 year of service at rates not to exceed 150% of the statewide average rate

The requesting customers must each commit to taking a

for broadband service.





iv. Must result in communications service offerings
which will be made available on a non-discriminatory basis to all residential and business
customers within the targeted geographic area;
v. Must request no more than \$100,000 from the
Authority; and
vi. Must include matching funding amounts at least
equal to the amount of funding being requested from the Authority.
b. Upon receipt of a proposed targeted project, the Authority
shall contact any eligible communications service provider currently offering service in
the targeted unserved or underserved area. Providers contacted by the Authority must
respond within 30 days to indicate whether they will or will not offer communications
services which will render the targeted eligible area no longer unserved or underserved
within one year of the date of the provider's response to the Authority.
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i. Any communications service provider that agrees to
offer service within one year as set forth above must commence operations on the project
within 45 days of responding to the Authority.
ii. Any communications service provider that agrees
to offer service within one year as set forth above that fails to complete such project
within the one year period is not eligible to be contacted under subsection $(C)(2)(b)$
above for any area in which the provider offers communications services.
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c. If no communications service provider agrees to offer
service pursuant to subsection $(C)(2)(b)$, the Authority shall evaluate the merits of the
targeted project based on:
i. The projected cost to the Authority of the project;
ii. The number of unserved or underserved customers
who will receive affordable communications services that were previously unavailable;
and
iii. The level of community interest within the targeted
area in subscribing to the communications services which will be made available through
the project.
d. If the Authority finds that the targeted process is
appropriate to fund, the Authority shall enter into an agreement with the communications
service provider proposing the targeted project to fund the project in an amount not to
exceed \$100,000 or the amount of matching funds set forth the proposal, whichever is
less.